

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the final Office Action dated November 13, 2008, are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Status of the Claims

Claims 8-12 are pending in this application, with Claim 8 being the sole independent claim. Claim 8 has been amended. Support for the claim changes can be found in the original disclosure, for example in Figure 2 and the accompanying description in the specification, and therefore no new matter has been added.

Request to Examiner Claim 12

The August 29, 2008 Amendment added new Claim 12, but the November 13, 2008 Office Action did not mention this claim. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner examine this claim.

Rejection

Claims 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,116,363 (Fuchimukai) in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0031347 (Fukuda) and U.S. Patent No. 7,079,185 (Koyama et al.).

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejection, independent Claim 8 has been amended. Applicant submits that as amended, this claim is allowable for the following reasons.

Independent Claim 8 relates to an image pickup apparatus comprising a lens barrel, an image pickup device for converting an object image into an electrical signal, an image display unit, and an exterior member comprising front and rear covers, each extending from a first side to a second side of the apparatus. Independent Claim 8 also recites a chassis being disposed at least between the lens barrel and the image display unit, extending from the first side to the second side of the apparatus. The chassis comprises first bent portions positioned at opposing ends of the chassis, fixed to the front and rear covers of the exterior member by a plurality of fixing members formed on the first bent portions in order to fix the chassis to the exterior member, and a second bent portion formed between the first bent portions.

Claim 8 has been amended to recite that the second bent portion is formed in an area other than an area between the lens barrel and the image display unit.

Thus, one non-limiting example shown in Figure 2 illustrates a chassis 11 having bent portions 11a and 11b at opposing ends thereof and bent portion 11d disposed around the SD card slot housing 7, which is in an area other than between the barrel 13 and the liquid crystal panel 15.

By using a chassis that extends from first to second sides of the apparatus, if a surface between the first bent portions is a plane surface, it is necessary to make the chassis thicker to achieve sufficient rigidity for the apparatus. However, the present invention, provides a second bent portion between the first bent portions of the chassis to achieve sufficient rigidity, without increasing its thickness.

In addition, by forming the second bent portion in an area other than an area between the barrel and the image display unit, the thickness of the image pickup apparatus can be reduced, as compared to an apparatus in which the second bent portion is formed in the area between the lens barrel and the image display unit. More specifically, it is noted that frequently, in image pickup apparatus, the lens barrel and the image display unit are disposed, one behind the other, in the thickness direction of the apparatus. As a result, if the second bent portion is formed in this area between the barrel and the display unit, the thickness of the apparatus will be increased by the thickness of the second bent portion. The present invention prevents this undesirable effect from occurring by forming the second bent portion in an area other than this area.

In contrast, the citations to Fuchimukai, Fukuda, and Koyama et al. are not understood to disclose or suggest a chassis disposed at least between a lens barrel and an image display unit, extending from first to second sides of the apparatus, comprising first bent portions positioned at opposing ends of the chassis, fixed to exterior-member front and rear covers, each extending from the first to second side, by a plurality of fixing members formed on the first bent portions to fix the chassis to the exterior member, and a second bent portion, formed between the first bent portions and in an area other than an area between the lens barrel and the image display unit, as recited by amended Claim 8.

Rather, the Fuchimukai is understood to merely show that the mount frame 4 (the element the Office Action identifies as corresponding to the chassis) is positioned to the side of the lens barrel 35, as seen in Figure 2. Moreover, there does not appear to be any disclosure of an image display unit in this patent or that the mount frame is disposed between an image display unit and the lens barrel 35. The Fukuda patent is understood to

merely show chassis 3 and 4 disposed to the side of a lens mount 6 and in an indeterminate position with respect to a finder eyepiece portion 13. The patent to Koyama et al. is understood to disclose a structure in which a chassis 55 is sandwiched between a front cover 53 and the back cover 54, and in which the chassis 55 is disposed between lens unit 67 and display 63. However, the mount frame 4 of Fuchimukai is not understood to have a bent portion to which an exterior member is fixed, the mount frame 4 is not understood to be disposed between the lens barrel and an image display unit, and a second bent portion, as recited in amended Claim 8, is not understood to be formed on the mount frame 4. In the Fukuda patent, chassis 3 and 4 are understood to merely have threaded holes to which front and rear chassis 1 and 2 are fixed, but are not understood to have first bent portions, as recited in amended Claim 8, let alone a second bent portion on chassis 3 and 4, as recited by amended Claim 8. And the chassis 55 of the Koyama et al. patent also is not understood to have bent portions for fixing the front cover 53 and the back cover 54 or a second bent portion, as recited by amended Claim 8.

Thus, the citations to Fuchimukai, Fukuda, and Koyama et al. are not understood to disclose or suggest the concept of forming a second bent portion of a chassis in an area other than an area between a lens barrel and an image display unit, as recited by amended Claim 8.

Since amended Claim 8 is understood to recite at least one feature not disclosed or suggested by the citations to Fuchimukai, Fukuda, and Koyama et al., Applicant respectfully submits that the Office has not yet established a *prima facie* case of obviousness against amended Claim 8, inasmuch as MPEP § 2142 requires the cited art to

disclose or suggest *all* the claimed features to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claim 8 be withdrawn.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable, due to their dependency from the independent base claims, as well as due to additional features that are recited. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the outstanding rejection, and passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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